

Intelligence Memorandum

Soviet Participation in the Japanese Peace Conference

Soviet motives in attending the San Francisco conference, and the possible tactics of the Russian delegation once the sessions begin, are the two big question marks looming over what was to have been a routine process of formalizing the Japanese peace treaty.

The Soviet Government's past position strongly suggests that the USSR is coming to San Francisco to exploit objections held mainly by Far Eastern nations over questions such as rearmament, Chinese representation and territorial provisions. The Soviet press has announced that the USSR will present proposals of its own at the conference.

There are several indications that a Russian-sponsored draft may be submitted for its diversionary and delaying effects. The 10 June note from the Soviet Foreign Office concerning the Japanese treaty negotiations proposed a conference for "consideration of available drafts" of the peace treaty. Previously Moscow had suggested that a Council of Foreign Ministers' meeting of the US, USSR, Great Britain and Communist China be held to prepare the treaty; this proposal might be renewed with a suggestion to broaden the scope of the conference so that all major Far Eastern questions could be considered. In a recent conversation with the British Ambassador, Gromyko stated that "it would be incorrect to assume that Soviet views will differ from those previously presented on the subject of the Japanese treaty."

Since the USSR is not likely to be able to disrupt the conference, its delegation may be limited to conducting a propaganda campaign exploiting the fears and uncertainties of the Asian and Pacific nations. Some of these nations are alarmed at the prospect of resurgent Japanese military power, and many fear any act which might antagonize an increasingly powerful Red China. One of them, India, approaches its policy decisions from a pan-Asiatic standpoint. The USSR can also attempt to sow dissatisfaction by portraying the treaty as a Western "diktat," imposed over the objections of the majority of Japan's neighbors.

These Soviet tactics may be successful in persuading a few Asian nations, at most, not to sign the treaty. The USSR could then refrain from concluding a treaty and derive whatever advantages it can from unregulated relations with Japan.

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An ultimate Russian refusal to accept the Anglo-American draft could provide a basis for the holding of a Soviet-sponsored Japanese peace conference to consider the Soviet draft. Such a conference would probably be attended by the USSR, Communist China, Poland, Czechoslovakia, Mongolian People's Republic, Korean People's Republic, and the Democratic Republic of Vietnam, but it is unlikely that any other Far Eastern nations could be induced to come.

The possibility exists, however, that the Soviet Government has decided to sign the treaty with whatever modifications it can achieve. In most respects, Soviet objections to the US-UK draft have involved not the actual text but the absence of certain provisions, such as returning Formosa to China or prohibiting Japan from joining regional security arrangements. It is conceivable that Soviet inability to hinder conclusion of the treaty or prevent widespread adherence to it has convinced the Kremlin that more can be gained by signing.

Soviet acceptance of the draft would be the first step in an attempt to draw Japan into the Asian Communist orbit by the lure of Chinese trade and other concessions. It would also provide the Soviet Union with an opportunity to demonstrate its good faith to Communist China, since Soviet concessions in Manchuria under the terms of the Sino-Soviet treaty run out when a treaty is signed with Japan. In any event, the Soviet Union's signature would be a cheap way to add substance to the "peace" campaign, and to decrease the chance of general conflict brought closer by the Korean War.

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There is no other evidence that the USSR is likely to sign the US-UK treaty, and so far Communist pronouncements on this subject strongly indicate the contrary. Moscow briefly informed its home audience on 16 August that it had accepted an invitation to attend the San Francisco conference, but at the same time it quoted Chou En-lai's protest against the treaty to the effect that it is "absurd and illegal" and aimed at permitting the US to transform Japan into a base for aggression in the Far East.

A Soviet walkout from the San Francisco conference, timed to coincide with a breakdown of the Kaesong talks, might be used to "justify" a renewal of the offensive in Korea.

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